

DECEMBER 1999

CALTRANS DISTRICT 7 EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

Inside Seven

Director Medina Visits Ventura County

By Patricia Reid

Employees of the Ventura Holiday Inn could hardly contain their amazement as a huge crowd of people suddenly filled up the hotel's usually quiet lobby area as it got closer to 5 p.m. on November 4. It was "standing room only" as concerned Ventura County residents, government officials, motorists and news media representatives entered a conference room to hear about transportation issues in their county personally from Caltrans Director José Medina.

Director Medina was the keynote speaker at this first-of-its-kind Town Hall Meeting held in the hotel. "Ventura County is definitely on the move," Medina told the gathering of over 100 people at the two-hour session. "When I entered the county, I couldn't help but be impressed with the amount of transportation construction taking place."

A huge front-page banner headline that ran the next morning in the Ventura County Star boldly announced "Caltrans to Fuel Highway Overhauls" and "Director Announces \$1 Billion for Projects in Ventura County."

Assemblywoman Hannah-Beth Jackson welcomed Director Medina and praised Caltrans for providing a speedy response to transportation problems in the county and said, "I sincerely thank Caltrans for engaging in this process and for all you have done for Ventura County."

Ginger Gherardi, Executive Director of the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), was Mistress of Ceremonies and District 7 Director Robert W. Sassaman introduced Director Medina.



Director José Medina is shown proudly reading the **Ventura County Star** article about the Caltrans Town Hall Meeting that took place the night before. The paper ran a large article about Director Medina's visit and his announcement about \$1 billion worth of upcoming improvement projects on the front page.

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THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Hats Off To A Mighty Team!

It's nice to have an opportunity to celebrate success. I've been involved in sports a lot of my life; I wasn't a super athlete, but for some reason I ended up being a good coach. I think I was a successful coach because I knew how to pick the right people to be on my team. I was impressed with the accomplishments made by members of the I-10 Long-Life Pavement Team.

Team members knew what to do and they were successful. I've decided to dedicate this column to recognizing as many team members as possible as my way of saying thanks for a job well done. Thanks also to those employees who worked behind the scenes to support the effort. We didn't have to drop other district projects to make this happen. I'm grateful that everything stayed on schedule. Headquarters staff recently asked me what was the cost to do the 55-hour weekend closure. The cost may be high, but I'm very proud that the cost to our customers was low.

Director José Medina praised the team's effort and he said Governor Gray Davis also gave the Department a lot of praise for the project. This was a big effort on a lot of people's part and it was obvious that a lot of planning and preparation went into it.

We used the same tactics that worked during the '84 Olympics. We saturated the news media and made drivers a little afraid to travel into Pomona that weekend. Radio and TV traffic reporters did another fantastic job in helping us to get the word out. In Los Angeles we have a unique situation because we have a cooperative relationship with our traffic reporters. To show our appreciation, Division Chief Frank Quon recently presented each of the traffic reporters a plaque from Caltrans. CBS-TV reporter Jim Thornton liked his plaque so well he proudly held it up on the television screen

during his traffic report one morning.

Victor Rollinger, Pomona's Director of Public Works, said: "This was an excellent job of construction and an excellent cooperative effort. Caltrans did an extraordinary job – this project is a model for the rest of the country."

Here's what others had to say about the I-10 project and the 55-hour closure:

Construction Division Chief Peter Chan: "Much appreciation and thanks to Traffic Management. Their hard work allowed Construction to focus on construction. A great traffic plan made our job easier."

Operations Division Chief Frank Quon: "I am very proud of this team and I will continue to tell our successes. We are the best in the state."

Design Division Chief Doug Failing: "This was the culmination of a series of events that began several years ago. Reconstruction is very different than original construction because today there are 200,000 vehicles per day going by."

Margie Tiritilli, Chief, Public Affairs: "Over a year ago Pat Reid single-handedly developed a huge media/public outreach I-10/55-hour closure campaign that even went into the states of Arizona and Nevada to inform commuters; truckers; the travel industry; elected officials; businesses; communities; emergency service groups and concerned cities in and around the Pomona area. Pat formed strong working relationships with Fairplex and Pomona Mining Company who worked with her to make this activity successful. Take a bow – Pat. It was your efforts that laid the groundwork for making this such a smooth operation."

Tom Choe, Chief, Office of Traffic Management: "I was very impressed with the Traffic Management Plan for this project. Chester Otani was the brain behind the whole planning process."

Jiwanjit Palaha, Project Manager: "Fortunately, it went very good. It was organized well – above expectations. I was especially impressed with Ray Higa's group. There was a really friendly atmosphere in the RV/Command Post. The Command Post really worked well. From the RV windows workers could see how the traffic was flowing and they even called the Freeway Service Patrol to clear an accident they saw was slowing traffic." David Yan, Construction Resident Engineer: "Because of all the help we got

from everyone and especially Albert Yu's group it went exactly as we planned."

Ray Higa, Chief, Office of District Traffic Manager: "Did we save your job, boss?"

"From a traffic management perspective, this project was a success because of the dedication and hard work by a team of employees who were led by a tireless general in Albert Yu."

Albert Yu, Traffic Management: "This is just half-time, we haven't finished yet – we still have a job to do out there."

Afsaneh Razavi, East Area Senior, Traffic Management: "The public outreach helped us tremendously in pulling off a successful Transportation Management Plan. My congratulations to everyone involved!"

Chester Otani, Traffic Management team leader: "Where did they all go? Nobody in their wildest imagination thought the queue would be that short!"

Diaa Yassin, Traffic Volumes Committee team leader: "By climbing on top of the roof of the RV at the Command Center I could really see the construction in action."

CHP Officer Rosa Ray from Baldwin Park who worked 14 hours on Saturday: "This project had really good communication. Everyone I talked to was friendly and helpful and the TMC staff provided good updates which I relayed to other officers."

These "VIPS" were present at the 55 hour closure: Stuart Anderson from Texas A&M; Bob Cady, Steve Helow and John Klemens from FHWA; Jeff Resler from U.C. Berkley; Wes Lum, Kevin Herritt, Mike Miles, Randy Iwasaki, Jack Boda, J.D. Bamfield from Caltrans HQ; Ric Magenti, Mohammad Sadiq, Shaila Chowdhury, Richard Heninger, Bing Long from Caltrans HQ Office of Pavements.

The following District 7 team members worked on the 55-hour closure and deserve the credit for the success:

Construction staff: ChiaChi Wang (Senior), David Yan, (Resident Engineer), Anwar Aziz, Victor Carvallo, Carl Capistrano, Cris Castaneda, Ivan Johnson, Kal Lambaz, Robert Lujan, Kelvin Nguyen, Mehdi Raffiee-Shirazi, William Rojas, Ruth Simons, Rola Arafat, Wahib Jreji, Jason Ngo, Jocelyn Chen, Pauline Wong, Anthony Ng.

Other staff that helped Construction: Michael Lopez, Kin Kwan, Reda Karout, Mustapha Jaber, Tsegorio Balinghasay.

Traffic Management Team and Office of



55-Hour I-10 Closure Is A Success!

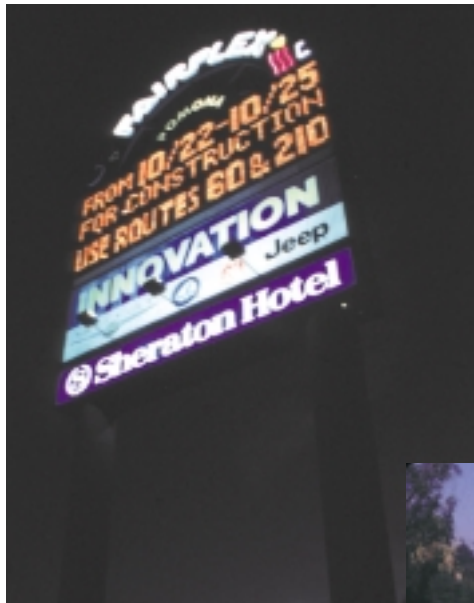
Members of Caltrans District 7's Long-Life Pavement construction project team are ecstatic that the long-anticipated 55-hour extended weekend closure of the San Bernardino Freeway (I-10) that recently took place October 22-25 in Pomona was a huge success! The closure was part of an innovative \$16 million pilot project that is testing new, faster setting and longer lasting concrete pavement. Morrison Knudsen Corporation of Highland successfully completed their weekend task of rehabilitating a 1.5-mile stretch of eastbound I-10 from the Route 57/210 Interchange to Garey Avenue eight minutes before deadline!

This project marked the first time the new concrete was used on a major freeway repaving project. The 55-hour weekend closure accomplished repairs that would normally require three weeks of six-hour nightly closures. The construction crews accomplished their awesome

task even though they faced a couple challenging problems. The first problem was the Southern California Edison Company power outage that



Command Center — District 7 Director Bob Sassaman joins members of the Traffic Management Team, Construction staff members and others at the Command Center located at Fairplex Park-and-Ride lot.



Closure Message — Fairplex message sign displayed Caltrans closure message to the motoring public.

occurred at 11:50 a.m. on Saturday at concrete plant #1 in Upland. Plant #1 was down until 3 p.m. Concrete plant #2 in Ontario started producing concrete within two hours. However, because

dents, the motoring public and local business for their patience and cooperation during our 55-hour closure of the I-10 this past weekend. Because of the outstanding cooperation of the whole community, the eastbound I-10 lanes reopened to traffic on time at 5 a.m. October 25 — as promised! Traffic was flowing so well on eastbound I-10 Sunday night, that the connectors from eastbound I-210 to eastbound I-10 and from northbound 57 to

eastbound I-10 were reopened ahead of schedule at 10 p.m. October 24. Sassaman added, "It was obvious that motorists took our advice and used nearby alternate routes. And because drivers were willing to take different routes, the dreaded traffic congestion



Work in Progress — Morrison Knudsen employees work feverishly to pour the fast-setting concrete on San Bernardino Freeway lanes during the 55-hour weekend closure.

of various mishaps, a total of three and one-half hours of valuable working

time was lost. The second major problem concerned a concrete paving machine that had trouble leveling the concrete pavement on an uphill grade. Four concrete panels had to be redone and a half-hour worth of production was lost because of this problem.

Robert W. Sassaman, District Director, thanked Pomona Valley residents, commuters and businesses in the area of the project. He said, "Caltrans wishes to thank Pomona resi-

that everyone feared did not materialize."

Sassaman said the project's success was due to good planning and good communication. The project had a comprehensive Traffic Management Plan that included staffing a mobile Command Center at the Fairplex Park-and-Ride lot all weekend. The Command Center served as a central clearing-house where team members received and processed detailed information from staff in the field.

The staff in the Division of Operations saw a need for a detailed plan early on. Chester Otani and Albert Yu were the



Taking Out the Old — More old pavement is removed to make way for the new fast-setting concrete.



Some Members of the Long-Life Pavement Team — Left to Right front row: David Yan, Kal Lambaz, Kevin Nguyen, Miguel Castillo, Chester Otani, Alan Dumaplin, Duke Huyhn, Albert Yu, Roger San Juan, Marv Jackson and Ray Higa. Back row: Sam Esquenazi

55-Hr. Closure

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two key leaders who were determined to make sure traffic was handled and managed according to the prepared plan.

Chester's staff did extensive field research before they selected the viable alternate routes that were incorporated into the Alternate Route Map that was widely distributed. After making numerous field visits, traffic engineers developed lists of potential problem areas where traffic control officers were needed. They also worked closely with staff from Los Angeles County and from the City of Pomona on signal retiming to maximize traffic flow on the detours.

Team members took a pro-active approach and changed traffic advisories on Changeable Message Signs as needed and relocated changeable message signs as conditions warranted. Other team members traveled in a helicopter to see what was happening on the whole freeway system. Traffic engineers borrowed two portable Highway Advisory Radios (HAR) from District 8. A total of three HAR's were in operation on I-10 that weekend.

And for over a year, the District's Media Relations/Public Affairs staff carried out a multi-element community outreach and

public awareness/media campaign. Coordinated by Pat Reid, Public Information Officer, four media events were held and local newspapers carried stories along with a detour map daily during the week prior to the closure. Deborah Robertson, Chief, External Affairs, said, "Thank you to Pat Reid for her single-handed effort in getting the word out to the public and the media. Pat was the focal

point."

The Graphic Arts Department under the direction of Duncan McIntosh, produced the brightly colored alternate route/detour maps that



The Concrete Solution — With numbered panels in the background, freshly mixed concrete continues to pour over the 55-hour weekend project.

the Los Angeles County Fair in Pomona; the Automobile Club offices; at several convention and visitor's bureaus; at airports; and much more. Robertson said that Graphic Arts personnel were instrumental in the project. She said, "The Graphic Arts Department were the unsung heroes printing thousands upon thousands of the helpful maps. Many thanks to Duncan and his staff for their efforts."

In addition, and very importantly, District 7 sends its appreciation and many thanks to the numerous traffic reporters who are relied upon time and time again for their ongoing support of the many Caltrans roadway

improvement projects, especially during the recent Long-Life Pavement construction project. Their assistance in getting the word out to the motoring public regarding roadway maintenance and construction improvement projects is invaluable and cannot be understated. At the November 4 Transportation Information People (T.I.P.) Meeting held every other month by the California Highway Patrol, traffic reporters including those from

radio and television were presented with special Caltrans Certificates of Appreciation. Some of the familiar faces present in the "world" of traffic reporting included: Jennifer York, KTLA Sky Cam 5 television traffic reporter; Rod Bernsen, Sky Fox traffic reporter KTTV Fox 11 News; Mark Denis, radio traffic reporter from KFI/KOST; and Jim Thornton, radio traffic reporter from KNX radio, and also seen on CBS. Representatives from Shadow Traffic, Metro

Contractors at Work — Morrison Knudsen employees continue the process of laying down the specialized pavement to last 30 years.

were distributed to the media; at

Traffic, Airwatch Traffic; KISS-FM radio, and many more were hand to receive their awards. District 7 was indeed happy to be able to show its appreciation to the traffic reporters, some very special partners in transportation.

All of this work could not have been

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Workers and Machinery — Huge pieces of machinery and equipment are used in this first-of-its-kind pavement project.



VCTC Visit — Ginger Gherardi, Executive Director, Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), talks with Director José Medina, District Director Bob Sassaman and Division Chief Doug Failing at her Ventura office.

Medina Visit

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All District 7 Division Chiefs and numerous Caltrans staff members were on hand to discuss construction projects. Large project maps were displayed around the room and project fact sheets were distributed.

"I'm glad there's a big turnout because this is only the second Town Hall Meeting that has been held in the state," said Ms. Gherardi. "We twisted the Director's arm and told him we wanted him to hold the next meeting here because we have a group of residents that really care about transportation in Ventura County." She emphasized that was the first time a Caltrans Director had ever come to speak in Ventura County.

Director Medina said he was "very pleased" to have an opportunity to meet with Ventura County residents and he brought warm greetings from Governor Gray Davis and from Secretary of the California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Maria Contreras-Sweet. He said he came to Ventura County because he wanted to hear from the residents directly. He said he wanted to personally find out what their needs are and what they wanted from

Caltrans. He said, "My goal is to make sure we're doing what the people want in the areas where we serve."

"This is not a one-stop visit. I will come back to monitor these projects," Director Medina told the crowd. He also stressed that he has an "open-door" policy and said he invites people to meet with him in Sacramento any time. He also said he carries a stack of Caltrans business cards with him that he hands



Town Hall Meeting — Director José Medina addresses Ventura County residents at the Town Hall Meeting at the Ventura Holiday Inn.

out whenever he meets someone. "I invite people to contact me with their questions or problems and I promise to respond back to them." Medina noted that, "The Town Hall format is one building block in what we hope will be a united effort on the state, regional and local level to meet Ventura County's transportation needs." Medina's remarks included a detailed description of \$1 billion worth of important transportation

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Commission Board Meeting — District Director Bob Sassaman speaks to the Ventura County Transportation Commission Board of Directors at Camarillo City Hall. Director José Medina was guest speaker.

Medina Visit

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improvement projects programmed for Ventura County. One of the major efforts discussed was the \$54 million widening project of the Santa Clara River Bridge along Route 101 between Ventura and Oxnard. Elected officials from both cities attended the meeting to offer thanks to Caltrans for planning the project and to ask that construction begin as soon as possible.

"On behalf of Caltrans, I also want to thank the elected officials of Ventura County for their help. Whether the problem is minor or major, we at Caltrans have come to rely on your expertise in matters of community involvement. Your understanding of the needs of your constituents, and that of critical transportation issues, is an invaluable resource for us. Your continued involvement has helped us establish a dialogue with the communities you serve which we may not have had otherwise," Director Medina said.

His remarks generated many rounds of applause throughout the evening. Ms. Gherardi coordinated a lively question and answer session following the speeches. District Director Sassaman, the division chiefs and various district

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Ventura Satellite Office -- Director José Medina (fifth from right), District Director Bob Sassaman (second from left) and Division Chiefs Mike Evans (seventh from left), Doug Failing (fourth from right) and Deborah Robertson (left), are pictured with staff from the Ventura Satellite Office and other District Office staff.



Answering Questions — Division Chief Doug Failing answers a question posed by a Ventura County resident who attended the Ventura Town Hall Meeting. Director José Medina looks on.



Group Photo — Graphic Arts Chief Duncan McIntosh climbed up on a cherry picker crane to take this photo of Director Medina and District Director Bob Sassaman with West Region Maintenance staff, maintenance division chiefs and other guests.



Shaking Hands — After having lunch with staff at the West Maintenance Region, Director Medina shook hands with many people.



Radio Interview — Director José Medina is shown being interviewed by KVTa radio reporter Kelly Murphy during the Ventura Town Hall Meeting.



Meeting the Director — Dave Servaes, West Region Maintenance Manager, shakes hands with Director José Medina during his visit to the West Region. Mike Evans, Maintenance Division Chief, looks on.



Poster Winner — Director José Medina congratulates Fillmore High School senior Adali Arana for his award-winning transportation poster. Ventura County Transportation Commission sponsors the annual poster contest.

Medina Visit

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staff members took turns answering questions from members of the audience.

During his visit to Ventura County, Director Medina also visited the Ventura Satellite Office, the Ventura County Transportation Commission offices and the West Region Maintenance Office in Camarillo.

A special highlight of his visit was presenting a new laptop computer to Fillmore High senior Adali Arana for winning VCTC's annual poster contest. Director Medina attended the VCTC Board Meeting at Camarillo City Hall where he enjoyed meeting lots of students and their parents who attended the meeting because they also had award-winning posters.

During remarks to VCTC he said, "When I appointed Bob Sassaman as District 7 Director I knew I had selected an individual who has and will continue to do his best to meet the transportation needs of Ventura County."

"By keeping communication lines open, we have an opportunity to resolve issues or offer a compromise whenever possible. We want to work with you as peer partners – willing to share whatever information we have that will help you resolve issues or allow your projects to proceed," he said.

Director Medina was treated to a delicious barbecue lunch when he arrived at the West Maintenance Region. "You have some outstanding cooks here and I look

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Talking to the Director — Director José Medina enjoys talking with staff at the West Maintenance Region.

Medina Visit

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forward to coming back and visiting with you all again," he told the maintenance employees when he spoke to a large group gathered in a garage after they all ate lunch together.

He told the group that maintenance and rehabilitation of our highways make up 40% of our budget – and he said, "money speaks." He emphasized that maintenance activities are a very important part of the whole program. "I just want to let you know that maintenance is critically important and it will be supported," he said. Director Medina announced that in January he would go out and visit more than 300 Caltrans maintenance stations throughout the state. "I am doing these visits because I want to let you all know that you are important to Caltrans." He told the employees that he appreciates very much what they do for Caltrans and what they do for the motoring public of California.

After inviting the employees to meet with him any time, he said, "I always make time to meet with employees because I think what you have to say is important – you are the ones out there on the front lines and you're in the best posi-

tion to advise us on how we can do a better job."

West Region Manager Dave Servaes thanked Director Medina for taking time out of his busy schedule to come out and meet and have lunch with them. "This is the first time in my career that the Director has come out to visit and we appreciate it very much." •



Jinwanjit (J. P.) Palaha
Senior Transportation Engineer

Dear J. P.:

I want to take a moment to commend you and your staff on successfully completing the 55-hour closure of the I-10 freeway. The professionalism exhibited by all of the involved parties is a great example of cooperation and teamwork. Special thanks to you for the additional consideration and implementation of our requests for extra signage. We experienced an even flow of traffic to all our events over the course of the weekend. I look forward to continuing the relationship our organizations have established as Caltrans continues rehabilitating our aging freeway system.

Sincerely,
Patrick C. Wright
Events and Parking Manager
Fairplex, Pomona



A Project Success Celebration -- Left to right: J. P. Palaha; Peter Chan; Bill Reagan; Pat Reid; District Director Bob Sassaman; Victor Rollinger, Director, City of Pomona, Department of Public Works; Chester Otani; Frank Quon; and Afsaneh Razavi join the multitude gathered in the cafeteria November 10 to proudly celebrate a job well done!



Long-Life Pavement Project in the News — Jennifer York, KTLA Television Sky Cam 5 Traffic Reporter reads about the project on the front page of the **Inland Valley Daily Bulletin**. York was among the many traffic reporters presented with Caltrans Certificates of Appreciation at the Transportation Information People (T.I.P.) Meeting November 4.

55-Hr. Closure

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accomplished without the tremendous support and teamwork from everyone involved in the project, including Caltrans' many partners in transportation. Caltrans especially wishes to thank the California Highway Patrol (CHP) for their continuing partnership and for helping with traffic management. Also thanks to Caltrans corporate partners, including: Fairplex in Pomona, the Pomona Valley Mining Company, the Automobile Club of Southern California; and the California Trucking Association.

On Wednesday, November 10, Sassaman, spoke to over fifty employees in the District Office Building cafeteria at an informal get-together celebrating the accomplishments of everyone involved. Under a special banner fabricated by the Graphic Arts Department, two celebration cakes stood ready to be eagerly devoured by all who participated in the successful project. Sassaman said, "I want to thank each and every one of you for the great job you did to make this project a success. This was a tremendous effort that required a lot of planning; and it also required everyone involved to make contributions. And everyone here contributed to that success." Frank Quon, Division Chief, Operations, added, "Everyone took ownership of their piece of the project."

Sassaman reiterated to the audience the importance of the continuing partnership between Caltrans and the

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Transportation Information People — Caltrans honored traffic reporters and met to discuss transportation issues at the Transportation Information People (T.I.P.) Meeting held every other month by the California Highway Patrol.



Rod Bernsen, KTTV Channel 11 News Sky Fox Traffic Reporter receives his Certificate of Appreciation from Frank Quon.



Jim Thornton, KNX/CBS Traffic Reporter, proudly displays his certificate, presented by Frank Quon.



Jennifer York, KTLA Television Sky Cam 5 Traffic Reporter beams as Frank Quon presents her with the special plaque.



Mark Denis, KFI/KOST Radio traffic reporter, happily accepts his Caltrans award of appreciation.



Equal Opportunity Corner

The Informal Discrimination Complaint Process

By Cathi McMahan, Equal Opportunity Officer

The departmental informal discrimination complaint process provides for informal, confidential counseling. The objectives of the counseling procedures are threefold: (1) To provide a means for resolving individual or group discrimination/sexual harassment complaint problems of a sensitive nature quickly, informally and at the lowest possible level. (2) To significantly decrease the number of formal complaints. (3) To make managers and supervisors more sensitive to the needs of individual employees or groups, and to improve the manager's capabilities for handling problems before formal equal employment opportunity complaints.

Employment discrimination refers to any act, policy or decision which makes or has the effect of creating or resulting in a non-job-related distinction and different treatment among or between persons or groups on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, ancestry, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, retaliation, sexual harassment, or such other classifications as may be provided specific protection in employment by California or United States statute.

It is the policy of the Department of Transportation to provide equal employment opportunity to all State civil service employees and applicants for employment on the basis of merit, efficiency and fitness; and to prohibit discrimination in every phase of personnel policy and practice in the employment, development, and advancement or treatment of its employees.

The Department's internal discrimina-

tion complaint process allows for the employee or applicant to seek resolution of his/her complaint issues either informally or formally. The internal process provides for prompt, fair and impartial review of complaints involving issues of employment discrimination. The Department's informal complaint process is administered by the Equal Opportunity Program; and Audits and Investigations administers the formal complaint process.

Employees or applicants who believe that they have been discriminated against may utilize the informal process and contact the Equal Opportunity Officer or Manager. Contact must be made within one year of the date of the discriminatory action. If the complainant just obtained knowledge of the facts of the unlawful discrimination, an additional 90 days is granted following the one-year expiration date. The Equal Opportunity Office will attempt to informally resolve the issues within 20 working days of the filing of an informal complaint. All parties involved work together to resolve the issues. Sometimes the allegations cannot be substantiated, in which case the complainant is advised of his/her right to file a formal complaint.

Although not all complaints can be resolved informally, the process at least allows concerns and issues to be brought forth and may be elevated to a higher level (as appropriate) for further investigation. The process also allows for the Equal Opportunity Office to help sort out the issues and identify those which we can address, versus those which need to go through a different process or channel. Frequently, listening and an empathetic ear are all a person needs to resolve their issue.

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the results of the informal process, he/she can proceed to the formal process. This can also be done at any time during the informal process after notifying the Equal Opportunity Office. The informal complaint will then be closed and the complainant may pursue the formal process.

If you have a question regarding the complaint process, please contact the Equal Opportunity Officer at 213-897-0597. •

Director's Chair

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the District Traffic Manager: Ray Higa, Albert Yu, Sam Esquenazi, Roger San Juan, Gary Young, Freddie Guerrero, Fred Sabin, Jr., Joe Venegas, Kevin Bui, Chuck Keeling, Jim Suyemasa, Gary Gram, Rob Colvin, Mel Daida, Carl Perez, Martin Oregel, Cecilio Burciaga, Maria Pasos, Steve Carll, Wayne Smith, Samson Teshome, Terry Wong, Abbas Novin, Sunil Parikh, Nabil Eskander, Roderick Torchin, Guillermo Gutierrez, Lloyd Barrera, Michael Valcho, Henry Uyeda, Duke Huynh, Edward Thomas, Jorge Vengco, Ali Bamshad.

TMC staff: Steve Holloway, Jeff Aragaki. Office of Traffic Design and Office of TMC Support: Liem Phan, Dat Ton, Liem Mai, Trieu Nguyen, Jesse Ruelas, Gus Gumboc, Bill Padmore, Binh Nguyen, Don Shoho, Ray Ciriaco, Moises Ramos, Yi Tsau. Office of Traffic Management: Miguel Castillo, Diaa Yassin, Hanh Pham, Hank Uyeda, Youssef Youssefzadeh, Ashraf Armanious, Duke Huynh, Reza Akramian, Dinh Dao, Wahib Jreij, Andy Quach, Shokoufeh Moghadam, Ahead Moussa, Chuong Tran, Gamini Weeratunga, Karim Salari, David Wang, Dan Leon, Jack Kao, Allan Dang, Simon Hadayet, Jonathan Wu, Venkata Tadi, Abdallah Alfakhouri, Giang Sinh Tran, Eduardo Del Pilar, Ahmad Ajjawi, Jack Lung, Hamid Kalkatechi, Manuel Gutierrez, Robert Hamilton, Ming Tsay, Rafael Benitez, Tim Nguyen, Jamal Fakh, Allan Dumaplin, Bob Masatsugu, Stanley Sakata, Eric Gordillo.

Materials Engineering: Kirsten Stahl, Thuy Le, Harry Hung, Jeff Tsai, Hung-duc Nguyen.

Design Group: Bill Reagan, Simon Kuo, Yin Chang, Stewart Stahl, Ronald Spray, Edmundo Gutierrez, Ismail Barati. Program/Project Management: Jiwanjit Palaha, Noel Balanza, Rose Casey, George Kohama. Public Affairs: Rick Holland.

Graphic Arts: Steve Devorkin. Terry Chapman, Eric Collar from Independent Assurance Sampling and Testing; Alex Perez, Noman Chowdhury, Mazin Ibrahim, from Field Testing. Private contractors: Donald Catterson, John Cutrell, Barrier Systems Inc.; Ed Rice, Owner CTS Cement; Frank Bruce, CTS. •

ROBERT W. SASSAMAN
District Director

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

The Caltrans “Family” Rallies To Help Find A Cure

In the early months of 1998, Jan-É (pronounced jannay) Luckie, 21, the daughter of Jean Luckie, a 15-year Caltrans Administrative Technician from Traffic Operations, was busy doing what most college students do: diligently going about her studies at Tusakegee College in Alabama. An outgoing, vivacious young student and a natural beauty, Jan-É began developing swollen lymph glands. It didn't slow her down, though, especially after a check-up determined it was nothing serious. And Jean was happy her daughter was in college working toward a degree in hotel/hospitality management.

During the summer, Jan-É's symptoms worsened. She tired easily, began losing her appetite and developed more swollen lymph nodes. Since she would be going home soon in August, Jan-É decided to wait until she was back in California to seek additional medical attention.

By the time she returned home, Jan-É had lost almost 40 pounds. Her doctor at Kaiser Hospital in West Los Angeles put her through more rigorous tests. This time the news wasn't so good. A painful bone marrow biopsy revealed that she was suffering from acute lymphoblastic leukemia: a serious, life-threatening illness.

Before beginning what she was told was her only option of chemotherapy and radiation, Jan-É opted to try a regime of herbal remedies. “Even if the herbal treatments didn't make me well, at least they would cleanse my body and prepare it for the chemotherapy treatments,” said Jan-É. The herbs made her feel somewhat better, and she even felt her lymph nodes getting smaller; but unfortunately blood tests confirmed that the disease process had not improved. Now facing the inevitable, Jan-É said she decided to endure three to four weeks of hospitalization and treatments. “I just said to myself, ‘if I've got to do it, then let's do it,’” she said.

After a 21-day regime of grueling chemotherapy treatments, a new bone marrow biopsy found Jan-É free of leukemia. Leaving the hospital confident, she would have to return for follow-up treatments and tests to keep the dangerous disease at bay. From October through February chemotherapy and radiation treatments continued, causing infections to her weakened body that landed her in the hospital on more than one occasion. But tests continued to confirm the great news: Jan-É was still in a state of remission and free from leukemia.



A Mother and Daughter Team — Jean Luckie, left, and daughter Jan-É, say “Thanks, Caltrans family” for the caring and the support.

Regular chemotherapy treatments continued through August of 1999. Then in mid-August, the unthinkable happened: Jan-É's tests showed she had relapsed and the disease had resurfaced. Unfortunately when this happens, a patient has to start all over again from the very beginning. “I had to start again from square one,” she said. “And I had to go back in the hospital, this time for a different type of chemotherapy.” Jan-É explained that it is harder to go back into remission from a relapse, than it is to stay in remission altogether.

September and October brought additional treatments for the struggling student; and struggling right along side her every step of the way was her supportive mother, Jean. It was during this time when the doctor, Dr. Dubernet of Kaiser, West Los Angeles, heard of a special clinical trial in San Diego for a new and encouraging leukemia drug. “It was the best thing for the kind of leukemia that I

have,” explained Jan-É. So, after another bone marrow biopsy to see if she qualified for the new trials was behind her, she began the brand new clinical trial.

Just this past November 3, Jan-É found herself in San Diego receiving the first treatments of the promising new drug. As of the printing of this story, Jan-É and Jean are waiting for the new medicine to work its miracles and make her well again. All the while Jan-É receives blood transfusions as necessary when her blood count is abnormal — another difficult procedure for her to endure.

In the meantime four special Caltrans employees and close friends of Jean and Jan-É have rallied to help find a cure. Joe Brazile from Media Relations/Public Affairs; Terri Harrison from Traffic Investigations; Ollie Jackson from Local Programs; and Melanie Bradford from Planning contacted the Red Cross, and a bone marrow drive was held November 19 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 107 South Broadway, Conference Room 1051. A simple blood test was all it took to help try to find a match for a possible bone marrow transplant donor — a procedure which will greatly improve Jan-É's chances for a full recovery. In addition, the family's church, the First A & E in Los Angeles, has a

registry which is also working with the Red Cross. They have already held three bone marrow drives to help find donor matches for all people with leukemia.

Jean said, “I so very much appreciate all the outpouring of concern and love, and all the efforts that everyone has put forward to help my daughter.” Always positive and upbeat, Jan-É added, “My faith and my Creator have given me the strength to get through this. And what I call my ‘foremothers,’ my mother and my grandmother, have given me my strength and my great spirit. And I want to thank everyone who has tried to help me.”

Thanks to Melanie Bradford, Joe Brazile, Terri Harrison, Ollie Jackson and the entire Caltrans “family” for all of their unselfish efforts in this vitally important cause. Updates will be forthcoming on Jan-É's progress. And to Jean and Jan-É, Caltrans sends its heartfelt good wishes for a complete recovery. ●

What's Cookin' At Caltrans

HOLIDAY FANCY AND FESTIVE FOOD

HOLIDAY FRUIT AND NUT MOLD

From *Celebrating 100 Years of JELL-O*

- 2 cups boiling water
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 large or two small packages any red flavor JELL-O gelatin
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1-1/4 cups ginger ale or lemon-lime carbonated beverage
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 cup chopped mixed dried fruit
- 1/3 cup currents or golden raisins
- 1/3 cup chopped candied or maraschino cherries
- 1/2 cup toasted chopped pecans or walnuts

Stir boiling water into gelatin in large bowl at least two minutes until completely dissolved. Stir in cold ginger ale and spices. Refrigerate about 1-1/2 hours or until thickened (spoon drawn through leaves an impression). Stir in fruits and nuts. Spoon into five-cup mold. Refrigerate four hours or until firm. Unmold and serve. Makes about ten servings.

SUE'S PARTY CHEESE SPREAD

Compliments of Sue McGinn, Caltrans Environmental Investigations

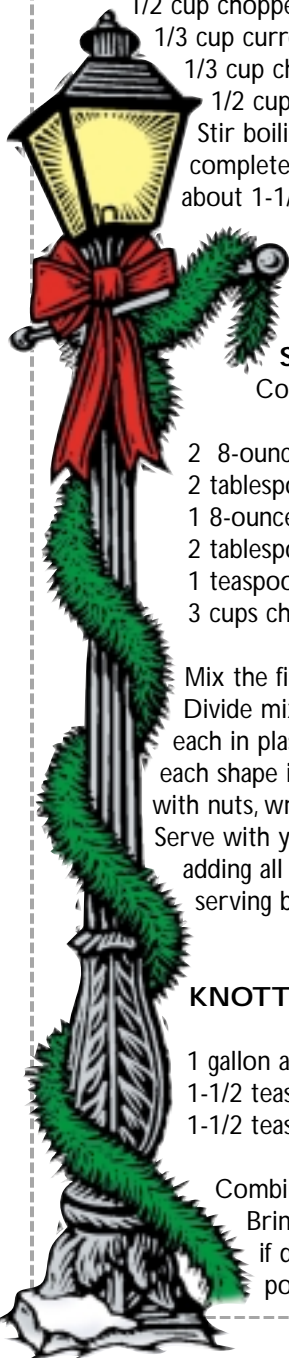
- 2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons green onions, finely chopped
- 1 8-ounce can crushed pineapple, drained
- 2 tablespoons bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 3 cups chopped pecans or walnuts, divided

Mix the first five ingredients and then stir in 1/2 cup chopped nuts. Divide mixture in half and shape into two logs or cheese balls. Wrap each in plastic wrap and chill until firm. When firm, unwrap and roll each shape in the remaining chopped nuts. After completely coating each with nuts, wrap again in plastic wrap and keep chilled until ready to serve. Serve with your favorite crackers. In a hurry? Simply mix as above adding all but 1/2 cup of nuts into the mixture. Place in two small serving bowls and top with remaining nuts.

KNOTT'S BERRY FARM'S HOT SPICED HOLIDAY CIDER

- 1 gallon apple cider
- 1-1/2 teaspoons whole allspice
- 1-1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 3/4 cup brown sugar, packed

Combine apple cider, allspice, cinnamon, cloves and brown sugar. Bring to a boil and simmer five minutes. Serve warm (or chilled if desired). For a party, the cider can be kept warm in a crock pot!



55-Hr. Closure

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radio and television traffic reporters for their ongoing support, especially during this past I-10 extended weekend closure. He said, "The traffic reporters out there did a fantastic job in helping us get the word out to the commuters. They have been instrumental to the success of this and other roadway improvement projects on our vast freeway system. Their support is a key factor in getting our messages out to the motoring public. They are a great group of hard-working professionals and we extend our sincere appreciation to all of them."

Work began on the Long-Life Pavement Project in April, 1999 and nearly 70 percent of the work has been completed. Completion is expected early next year. Engineers involved in the effort will be evaluating all aspects of this unique project to determine if it will become a model for future rehabilitation projects throughout the nation.

Congratulations Long-Life Pavement Construction Project Team! •

Inside Seven

IS PUBLISHED BY THE
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 7 • EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT
120 SOUTH SPRING STREET • ROOM 100
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 897-4867 • FAX (213) 897-3674
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist07/>

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PRINTING GRAPHIC SERVICES
DISTRIBUTION IRMA LOPEZ

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